



**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

Leaders of All Councils  
By email

**Brandon Lewis MP**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Communities and Local  
Government**

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06 January 2013

Dear Leader,

The Government's written ministerial statement, laid in parliament on 18<sup>th</sup> December, set out clearly the Government's intention that the element of localised council tax support funding provided to local authorities which reflects reductions in town and parish tax bases should be passed down to those councils. I am writing to bring this to your attention, and to emphasise the importance of billing authorities and town and parish councils working together to agree this level of funding. I attach a copy of the statement and the link to it in Hansard.

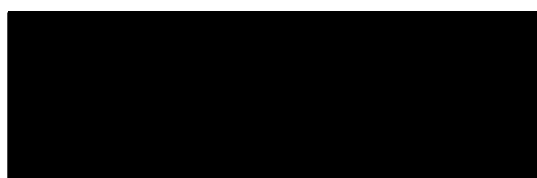
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/December%202013/16%20December/8.%20DCLG%20LG%20Finance.pdf>

I wrote on this issue in 2012 and I am encouraged that statistics recently published show that 98 per cent of the funding attributable to parish and town councils was passed down for 2013-14.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing-england-2013-to-2014-individual-local-authority-data>

In 2014-2015, the funding provided to local authorities in respect of local council tax support will be £3.3bn, the same amount as for 2013-14. As part of our move to a more flexible local government funding system, the LCTS funding and the town and parish council element within it is not separately identified at a local authority level, but forms part of the overall funding available to local authorities. However, the fact that the town and parish element of the funding is not separately identified and is not ring-fenced should not be used as an excuse to avoid passing down funding, or to avoid proper engagement with parish and town councils.

The Government believes that as the tier of local government closest to their communities, parish and town councils have a key role to play in our vision for localism and the Big Society. Parish councils provide communities with a democratically accountable voice and a structure for taking community action. We want to help parish councils take on a greater service delivery role for their local communities, and use the community rights available to them through the Localism Act 2011.



**BRANDON LEWIS MP**

Councillor Peter Fleming  
Leader of the Council



Brandon Lewis MP  
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Tel No: 01732 227180  
Ask for: Cllr Peter Fleming  
Email: Cllr.Fleming@sevenoaks.gov.uk  
My Ref: PF/kd  
Your Ref:  
Date: 26 February 2014

Dear Brandon

Good to see you yesterday, your off the cuff remark reminded me that I hadn't responded to your latest missive on Council Tax Support to Parishes, my apologies.

In the final paragraph you state your disappointment to learn that some councils haven't passed monies down to the parishes this year, perhaps it is worth at this stage sharing my disappointment that you are unwilling or unable to point to the funding you claim should be directed towards the parishes. This year Sevenoaks District Council saw its RSG reduce by 24%. To be honest I wouldn't even bother complaining about this normally and I along with my colleagues have long been resigned to the fact that we will have had our RSG reduced to a de minimis amount within a few years, but then for ministers to insist that they have included an amount for the parishes within this reduced figure really doesn't stack up.

Hats off to you, this is a very neat ministerial trick, but some of us have been caught before and are wise to the old 'we will ring fence it for one year then claim it is there in future years'.

So to be honest we haven't chosen not to pass the money on, you and I both know the money wasn't there in the first place!

I have included a copy of my letter to parish chairmen.

See you soon.

Best wishes

  
Cllr Peter Fleming  
Leader Sevenoaks District Council  
Encs





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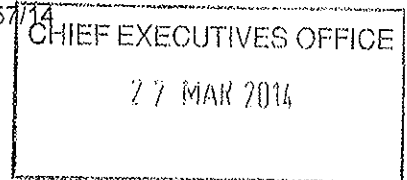
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Our Ref: BL/BL/006657/14  
Your Ref: PF/kd

25 MAR 2014

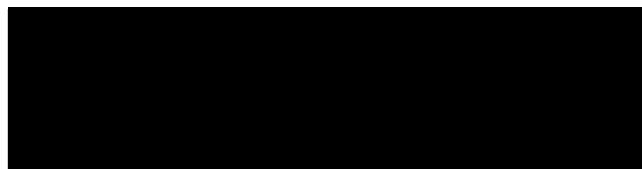


Thank you for your letter of 26 February in regards to parish funding, further to my letter sent to Council Leaders on the 21 February 2014.

I note your comments, and I acknowledge the measures Sevenoaks District Council has made to contribute to the Government's vital programme of deficit reduction.

You comment in your letter about raising parish expectations and the lack of clarity from central government. As I outlined in my Written Ministerial Statement of 18 December, there is some £3.3 billion in the settlement this year for Council Tax support schemes. There is an element within this national pot that is there specifically to reflect reductions in the parish tax base. We have not separately identified the money because it is not ring-fenced and as caseloads change and schemes evolve, the amount that different parishes need will change. It would be wrong to try to manage that centrally.

However, we have been clear that we expect billing authorities to carry on passing on support to town councils and parishes to help mitigate any reduction in their taxbase due to the local Council Tax support scheme.



BRANDON LEWIS MP